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Great Comberton Parish Council

2024/10

Parish Council Meeting - Minutes Monday 2nd September 2024, 7.00pm Village Hall

Parish Councillors Present: K Collingwood (Chair), S Hamilton, (Vice-Chair), S Hickey, A Lavelle & D Wilks.
District Cllr B Hardman, County Cllr A Hardman.

Clerk/RFO: Nicola Harding

In attendance: No parishioners

1. Apologies

Received from Cllr Hodgson.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations.

3. Casual Vacancy

Two completed applications were considered and discussed. Following a debate about the merits of each applicant and a subsequent vote by Cllrs, it was agreed to formally co-opt K Barnes at the next parish council meeting. Cllrs were in agreement that the additional applicant had many positive qualities and proactive ideas, therefore it was agreed that the Clerk make contact regarding a further approach, should another vacancy arise.

Action: Clerk to update applicants.

4. Parishioner's Comments

No comments had been received.

5. Minutes of meeting held on Monday 13th May 2024

Proposed Cllr Hamilton, seconded Cllr Lavelle, all in favour to approve the minutes as a true record.

6. Progress reports from Parish Activities: brief updates

a. Lengthsman: The July work plan had been received – clearance of gully grates, vegetation around signs and visibility splays, weeding and footway siding had been completed in and around the village.

b. Highways: It was confirmed that Severn Trent have been informed of a fresh water leak along Pershore Road and are due to attend to rectify in the near future.

c. Police: Speed checks have been conducted in the village over the Summer months. Detailed parish priorities relating to speeding and garden/farm thefts have been forwarded by the Clerk to the Safer Neighbourhood Team for their attention. A further request will be made for information regarding the next speed checks planned in the village, as it was noted that five vehicles have come off the road this year due to excessive speeds.

Action: Clerk to relay to the SNT to establish any updates.

d. Footpaths/PRoW: Details were circulated from WCC of the extended footpath closure of PS-561 & GC-500 due to a broken bridge.

Footpath construction works are underway from Back Lane to Pershore Road – following assurances from WCC that the footways would be restored to their original width, Cllr Collingwood and Cllr Hardman agreed to reiterate this with the team working in the village from 2nd September.

Action: Cllr Collingwood/County Cllr Hardman.

Following a previous discussion about the need for a post at the end of Quay Lane, thanks were extended to Cllr Hardman who agreed to make a contribution via his local divisional fund. It was agreed that access is required beyond the post to enable contractors to attend to trees for example in future, therefore Cllr Collingwood agreed to explore options of lockable posts to share with Cllrs. It was also agreed that any outstanding expenditure may possibly be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL) from Wychavon District Council.

Action: Cllr Collingwood/Clerk.

e. Broadband: Remaining villagers have been connected and no further issues have been noted, therefore it was agreed to remove this as a future agenda item. County Cllr Hardman enquired about the strength of the mobile phone signal in the village, and it was confirmed that this was now reasonable. Another tower may be considered towards Elmley Castle, given this village is in the shadow of Bredon Hill and therefore mobile signals are weaker.

f. Wychavon DC 'Our Community Can': Cllr Hamilton & Cllr Hardman reported on the meeting attended in August with representatives from Pershore Volunteer Centre, Wychavon District Council and the Combertons/Elmley Castle Parish Councils. Lottery Community funding is available to support these rural communities to reduce social isolation and bring communities together, through fun and engaging creative and physical activities. This is a community led approach whereby volunteers and communities who understand local needs and motivations network with other individuals and organisations to deliver taster sessions, support new active or creative opportunities, in order to become sustainable and access potential funding. Applications close after 5th September, however as the three Parish Councils have expressed an interest, there is an opportunity to acquire up to £3,000 per community.

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It was agreed to circulate a questionnaire to the village and post a hard copy to those not on the email system to gauge interest and suggested ideas. *Action: Cllr Hamilton.*

g. Calc Training: Cllr Lavelle updated members about the Autumn schedule for training provided by Worcestershire Calc, which was circulated to members ahead of the meeting. It was recommended that these are positive opportunities to network with other councils and understand the legalities attached to the role of Cllr.

Action: Interested Cllrs to make contact with the Clerk to book a place. Clerk to forward additional updates from Calc as received.

h. Avon vale River Action Group: District Cllr Hardman confirmed that Wychavon will offer dates for water testing training to ensure that volunteers are aware of health and safety and insurance procedures. It is likely that this will be a once a month commitment by volunteers, who will collaborate with Little Comberton Parish and an existing volunteer who has completed testing of Mary Brook.

It was agreed that Cllr Hardman would circulate training dates to the Clerk once arranged and Cllr Lavelle proposed to send out a reminder on behalf of the Parish Council via the village email, to establish any further interest.

Action: Cllr B Hardman/Clerk/Cllr Lavelle.

i. Community Infrastructure Levy (CiL): As village development commenced in the period October 2023-31 March 2024, a proportion of CiL has therefore been paid to the Parish Council in April 2024 @ £1,074, to be utilised within five years of its receipt. In line with regulations, monies received must be used to support development by:

- funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure, or
- anything else concerned with addressing the demands that developments place in an area

A discussion ensued regarding potential projects that may apply and it was proposed that repairs to gaps in the railings to complete the work undertaken at Brailles Orchard would be positive, in addition to meeting the £100 shortfall for costs incurred for the new gate installation and potential funding towards new posts at Quay Lane. It was agreed that the Clerk would clarify these proposals with Wychavon for their approval and confirm to Cllrs. Cllr Collingwood agreed to then liaise with ML regarding completion of the fencing repairs.

It was also noted that positive improvements to the Brailles entrance had been completed via regrading of the area, which is to be financed by the Flower Show Funds.

7. District and County Councillor's reports:

County Cllr Hardman:

New Government: Following a quiet Summer period, the County Council is awaiting new direction from government, after the general election in May.

Gully emptying: Gully emptying across the District commences on 10th September. Additional emptying is required around Bredon Hill and it is hoped that this will increase in frequency. Parishioners are encouraged to log any issues noted onto the WCC website, via:

[Report drainage and flooding on a highway | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Action: Cllr Collingwood agreed to report locations previously noted in the village for attention.

Raac concrete: Measures to address this issue at County Hall continue.

Pensions: The WCC Pension Fund is reported to be in good health.

District Cllr Hardman:

'Our Community Can:' Updates regarding the community led initiative using lottery funding are reported under item 6f.

Flower Show: Congratulations were extended to the Flower Show committee and all its volunteers for a fantastic village show and community atmosphere.

8. Planning

W/24/00721/HP: Valley House, Church Street – Demolition of detached garage & erection of new garage & summerhouse – this application has been approved.

W/24/00607/HP: Replacement garage and removal of existing garage and stable outbuildings - Waterbrook House – this application has been approved.

W/24/01293/CLE: Certificate of Lawfulness for the continued use of the land as residential curtilage in association with the property known as Waterbrook House – this application has been approved.

W/24/00922/LB: Removal of existing render from north elevation and replacement of the damaged cement render with lime render
Location: Shelton Farm, Lower End – this application has been approved.

W/24/01235/LB: Retrospective application for repairs to outbuilding/barn within the curtilage of grade 2 listed Fern cottage – a decision remains pending.

W/24/01465/HP: Proposed single-storey extension; new dormers, roof lights, windows and doors; and new outbuilding to provide workshop and store: Hopestan House – there were no comments to submit and a decision remains pending.

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8. Finance

a) Current Balances at 26th August 2024

Community Account:	£6,811.13
Premium Account:	£1,802.45
TOTAL	£8,613.58

b) Payments to report:

Salary: August 2024	£323.92
*Expenses: July-August 2024	£36.00
*Lengthsman: July 2024	£180.00
Salary: July 2024	£323.92
Lengthsman: June 2024	£180.00
Salary: June 2024	£323.92
Lengthsman: May 2024	£180.00
*Village hall hire: 2 x May meetings	£21.00
*S Cooper: Gate Brailles Orchard	£600.00
TOTAL	£2,147.76

Proposed Cllr Hickey, seconded Cllr Lavelle, all in favour to approve the payment presented.

c) Bank reconciliation (i) 30 June 2024:

Documents have been approved and verified by Cllr Lavelle – it was noted that there is currently a minimal fund retained in the premium account, so if monies from the community account are transferred across, there would be an opportunity for additional interest to be accrued. It was agreed that the clerk would establish a suitable amount to retain in the community account for regular payments, with a view to approving a transfer of the council's reserves into the premium account once access arrangements have been confirmed with Barclays. It was also agreed to check second authority details with Barclays.

Action: Clerk.

Review of 2024/25 budget: The Clerk reported on the budget headings to date, with income and expenditure on track against the budget. There are two overspends in expenditure due to national increases incurred in insurance premiums and electricity charges. Unexpected Community Infrastructure Levy income has been received from Wychavon District Council @ £1074.00, ring-fenced for future projects as discussed under item 6i. Documents for the second quarterly reconciliation will be prepared and forwarded to Cllr Lavelle by the Clerk after 30th September 2024. *Action: Clerk/Cllr Lavelle.*

d) Proposal to consider expenditure towards bench repairs:

Cllr Lavelle drew attention to the bench beside the telephone box, which has a wooden slat missing. As it is unclear whether this is a parish council asset or the responsibility of Rooftop Housing Group, it was agreed to approach KB to establish if this should be maintained by Rooftop or the Parish Council. Should this be the council's responsibility, Cllr Collingwood agreed to request if this is a task the lengthsman could undertake. *Action: Clerk/KB/KC.*

9. Correspondence

WCC Highways A briefing note has been received on the Government's consultation on proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and other changes to the planning system following the change in government. The consultation closes on 24 September 2024 and Cllrs are encouraged to comment.

10. Councillor's reports and items for future agenda:

Cllr Lavelle noted the conditions of the grant received by the War Memorial Trust, which requires an annual visual inspection. The last one was conducted in November 2024, therefore the Clerk agreed to make contact with the conservation architect who completed checks last year. *Cllrs were reminded of the forthcoming community AED training booked for Monday 30th September at 7pm in the hall. The Clerk confirmed that 9 parishioners had secured a place on a first come, first served basis, and Cllr Collingwood & Hodgson will represent the parish council.*

11. Date of Next Meeting Monday 4th November 2024 at 7.00 pm

Signed

Date.....

Chairman